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PP RUEHMR RUEHRN  
DE RUEHSB #0394/01 1281502  
ZNY CCCCC ZZH  
P 081502Z MAY 07  
FM AMEMBASSY HARARE  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1445  
INFO RUCNSAD/SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY  
RUEHUJA/AMEMBASSY ABUJA 1593  
RUEHAR/AMEMBASSY ACCRA 1460  
RUEHDS/AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA 1597  
RUEHRL/AMEMBASSY BERLIN 0261  
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 0861  
RUEHDK/AMEMBASSY DAKAR 1225  
RUEHKM/AMEMBASSY KAMPALA 1653  
RUEHNR/AMEMBASSY NAIROBI 4058  
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS 1422  
RUEHRO/AMEMBASSY ROME 2080  
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 0720  
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC//DHO-7//  
RHEHAAA/NSC WASHDC  
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS  
RHMFISS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC  
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 1814  
RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHDC  
RUCPDOG/DEPT OF COMMERCE WASHDC  
RUFOADA/JAC MOLESWORTH RAF MOLESWORTH UK//DOOC/ECMO/CC/DAO/DOB/DOI//  
RUEPGBA/CDR USEUCOM INTEL VAIHINGEN GE//ECJ23-CH/ECJ5M//

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 HARARE 000394

SIPDIS

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AF/S FOR S. HILL  
NSC FOR SENIOR AFRICA DIRECTOR B. PITTMAN  
USAID FOR E. LOKEN  
ADDIS ABABA FOR USAU  
ADDIS ABABA FOR ACSS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/08/2017  
TAGS: [PHUM](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [ZI](#)  
SUBJECT: LAWYER'S MARCH ENDS IN VIOLENCE

REF: HARARE 00383

Classified By: Charge Eric T. Schultz under Section 1.4 b/d

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Summary  
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[1](#)1. (U) A May 8 march organized by the Law Society of Zimbabwe to protest the arrest of two humanrights lawyers, Alec Muchadehama and Andrew Makoni (reftel), ended with violence as riot police used batons to disperse and beat a crowd of approximately 40. Police temporarily detained several of the marchers, but they were released and there appear to have been no arrests. The extent of any injuries remained unknown. Post has provided recommended press guidance in paragraph 6. End Summary.

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Lawyer's Protest March Violently Disbursed  
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[1](#)2. (U) Law Society President Beatrice Mtetwa called for the march to deliver to Minister of Justice Patrick Chinamasa, Attorney General Sobuza Gula-Ndebele and Police Commissioner Augustine Chihuri a petition protesting the government's arrest of Muchadehama and Makoni as a "direct attack" on the independence of the legal profession.

[1](#)3. (U) More than 40 lawyers gathered in judicial robes in front of the High Court to start the march. Western diplomats, including Embassy personnel, were present as observers. As the start time of the march approached, the



officer in charge of the 20 or so riot police present ordered the crowd to disperse or they would be beaten. When the lawyers did not disperse he ordered his men to move in. Initially the police made only a half-hearted effort to get the lawyers to disperse. However, the officer in charge then chased after the group shouting "I said charge them, I said charge them." The police then began beating the lawyers with batons.

¶4. (SBU) Law Society President Mtetwa told us that as the initial beatings took place she and two other lawyers attempted to proceed to the Ministry of Justice to deliver the petition. Several police officers approached them, beat them, and then forced them into a car. The police drove them to the outskirts of town, had them get out of the car and lie on their stomachs, and beat them on their backs. After police left, Mtetwa and the two other sought medical attention.

¶5. (U) Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights (ZLHR) lawyers told us after the march that several lawyers had been briefly detained but that none were arrested. They did not yet have information on the extent of the injuries suffered by the marchers.

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Comment and Recommended Press Guidance  
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¶6. (C) To our knowledge, this is the first time that Zimbabwean lawyers have ever been publicly beaten by police. As noted reftel, the government is crossing new lines in its

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efforts to suppress all opposition. In order to draw international attention to the government's continuing abuses, we recommend the Department release a press statement along the following lines:

&We deplore the Government of Zimbabwe's attack today on lawyers protesting the detention this weekend of two human rights lawyers. The government's assault on the legal profession and the rule of law is part of its continuing effort to suppress all opposition in advance of next year's election. These actions are not conducive to the free and fair election Zimbabwe needs to bring an end to its crisis. We call on the Government of Zimbabwe to respect the rights of all Zimbabweans, to respect the rule of law, and to allow the legal profession to serve its important role unmolested.8  
SCHULTZ